

1972

Skyark



1972  
Vol. 1 No. 1

The whole long day  
he sang and is unsated still -  
the skylark.

Bashō

## Contents

Author	Title	Page
<b>Poetry</b>		
Carol Sadewasser	Autumn Garden	5
	Old Man Alone	13
Duane Zandstra	Reflections at Twilight	5
Kimm E. McLaughlin	Song of Arwen Evenstar	6
D. M. Henderlong	for al	7
	Thank You	15
	a reflection	37
John York	as you are away	22
	If	22
Tom Joyce		22
Barbara Stahura		31
Fred Barton	Rain Thoughts	31
Christine Webb	De-Liberate Me	32
Joe Kaminski	What Price? Freedom	32
Crimean Solcrom	From Life	34
	Man is a Bird	35
	A Wave Revisited	38
	From Chemistry	48
	Ode to Mary	49
Mada Devetak	Progress	37
Peter R. Claussen	Memories of Minnesota	46
David Sheppard	Thinking Back	53
<b>Prose</b>		
Jim Healy	Please Spit in the Sandust	9
John M. Gerovac	Joseph	17
	The Six P.M. News	40
Kimm E. McLaughlin	The Days of Kerry's Dancing	23
Russ Antczak	Victory	39
Linda Lonadier	Untitled	51
Crimean Solcrom	In Defense of the Poet	54
<b>Art</b>		
William Ward		4
Nicholas Cost		8
		14
Joe Plesak		16
Kirsten Kucer		21
Wiedeman		25
Tina Becker		30
Chris Dostatini		29

Tina Becker	36
John Wiegand	33
Pat Nolan	42
Dennis Brown	45
Greg Cap	52
Joel Janowski	55

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WM WARD



Carol Sadewasser

Honorable Mention - Poetry  
Sigrid Stark Contest

Autumn Garden

Imagine that we dreamed,  
Dreamed forever of the awakening.  
Much as infant wrens on a thin beaded branch against the sky,  
We waited.  
And one among us took the sun  
and forced it through a crack in the window,  
And behold:  
A handful of topaz on the nursery floor.  
Then ponies, all fancy and white  
In the spot on the floor,  
Escaped from carousels and came  
Straightway, single file to where you, my child, and I  
Were dreaming of the awakening of leaves.

Duane Zandstra

Reflections at Twilight

A day, yet nothing; something going out of focus...  
Trees blending into hills; darkness rises from mountain base as  
The sun slides off the top to hidden depths of the other side.

I walk alone,  
Treasuring the last beams of light;  
Diamonds about to be lost,  
Not noticed until most of the jewels are stolen  
By the darkness.  
Pebbles, dust...few jewels now.

The river can only reflect.  
Illuminating fully or partially, it only reflects.  
Thoughts of you come with oily, liquid ease;  
But it is only a reflection;  
Distance, surrealism dominate.  
All is nebulous.

Worse is the darkness; something going out of focus...  
Trees blending into hills; treasure lost; groping is grotesque.  
The sun is hiding...no more jewels; now nothing, a night.

Song of Arwen Evenstar

\*based on J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy, The Lord of the Rings

The winter breathed its frosty mist  
to touch the bounds of Middle-earth  
with icy winds and snowy dance,  
quiet tales, sober minds; lest  
fear and dread become as one, and worth  
of courage faltering by chance  
to wander from the lighted way,  
and meet the Darkness in advance.

Though seasons pass in Rivendell,  
each change a wonder to possess!  
For elvenlight holds magic sway,  
and nature sprinkles gentle spills  
for those who move in Imladris.  
And ever would one wish to stay,  
experiencing blessed peace  
of tender nights and timeless days.

A Lady waits in Rivendell,  
to sit beside her father's hearth  
and listen for a love so far  
from sight of her; and knew she well  
his danger as he walked the earth  
with those who carry words that are  
forbidding life; for lives to save.  
But still he dreams of Evenstar.

Oh Aragorn, her Dunadan,  
who journeyed wide from Westergesse  
to ride with Rangers of the North  
and banish Evil from the land.  
Though his heart would be in Imladris,  
where love of Arwen found its birth.  
Undomiel, Undomiel!  
Oh she that knew his worth!

And years he wandered from the light,  
beyond the gaze of Evenstar,  
through lands that marked the Evil way.  
All witness to his power and might  
proclaimed his kingship; Elessar,  
Elfstone of Gondor on that day  
when Darkness suffers its despair,  
and Shadows fall away.



Then she did join him in his land  
to be his queen, Undomiel,  
as mortal people, doomed to die;  
she chose her fate by no command,  
except for love of her Estel.  
And when she passed the earth did sigh  
for one so fair; the elvenmaid,  
in Lorien she lies.

D. M. Henderlong

for al

hot days, melted fudgesicles, and splashes of blue  
water are gone now.  
Time passed  
and all the words that could have been spoken weren't  
and yet too many were.  
It's of no consequence however.  
Words are idle thoughts that are released  
merely because they were simple dawdlings  
of a simple mind.  
Yes, wanderer, a man is an island.

I have loved you yet  
the two were not mingled  
and never will  
A man is alone for the rest of his life.

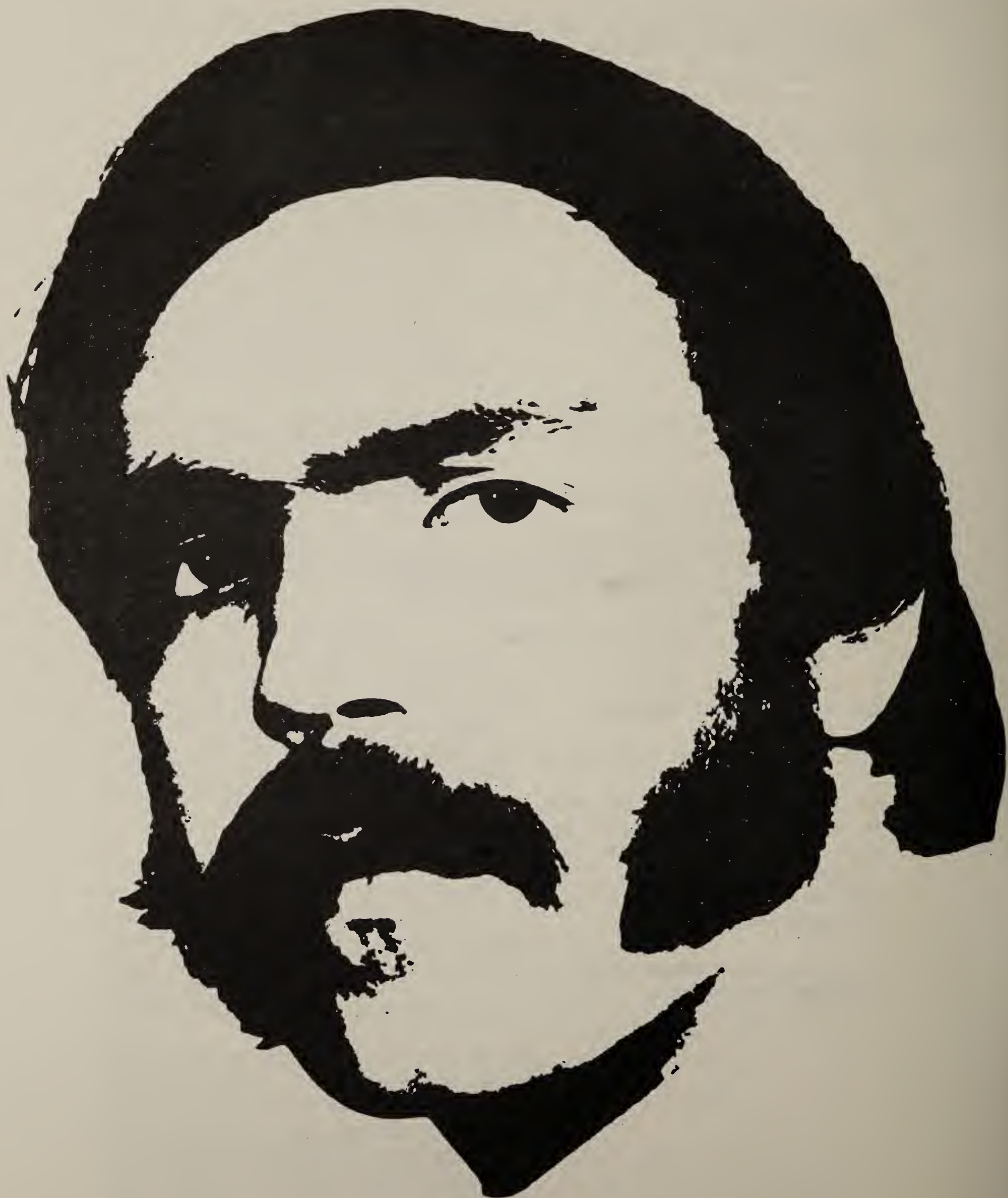
No one will remember you when it's done.  
No one will remember your quiet ways,  
your solemn stares, your troubled eyes.  
except maybe me  
And even I was only a visitor.  
The only visitor.

Every man must stand alone.  
Sometime and always.

Spring Rain

Rain on a spring day:  
to the grove is blown a letter  
someone threw away.

- Issa





Jim Healy

First Prize-*Informal Essay*  
*Sigrid Stark Contest*

Please Spit in the Sawdust

It was a rainy mid-afternoon in 1965 when my father took me, for the first time, into the old Central Hotel, an ancient building near the Penn Central tracks. Although I was only seven years old, I had already visited almost every bar in North Olean. My father, a heavy, beer-drinking Irishman, was fond of taking me with him when he made the rounds on a Saturday evening.

We entered the hotel through the arched double doors on North Union Street. Inside I jumped up and down to shake the rain off my boots and jacket. Under my feet, the threadbare carpet soaked up the water as fast as it fell. We were in the lobby. Old men wearing wrinkled, brown suit coats sat in the stuffed chairs, smoking cigars and reading newspapers. Discarded papers and cigar butts littered the carpet. Although the carpet was worn thin, I could see, in the corners where no one ever walked, that it had once been thick and colorful. Now it was as dingy as the faded green drapes that covered the windows. The windows were large and the drapes covered them from the floor to the ceiling. I looked up at the ceiling. It seemed so high and far away. I wondered how anyone could change the bulbs in the hanging globe lamps. Also hanging from the ceiling, over the circular, wooden registration desk, was a fan with two long blades. It wasn't turning. Under the fan and behind the desk sat the clerk on a high stool. He was staring across the lobby and out the window. A few feet to the left of the desk was a heavy wooden door. A sign on it said "Bar" and that's where my father was going. We walked past the stairway and around a glass display case full of cigars, cigarettes and candy. My father held the heavy door open for me.

Inside, men were lined up all along the bar, the booths were filled with people and there wasn't much standing room on the floor. Everyone was talking, laughing, shouting and making so much noise that I could barely hear the jukebox, which was close to the door we had come in. Next to the jukebox, along the same wall, were the high-backed, dark wood seats and the tables that made up the booths. There were ten or twelve of them, extending in a row to the other end of the barroom where there was another door that opened into an alley. The barroom was as long as the building, but not too wide. There was a narrow aisle between the booths and the bar itself, which also ran the length of the room. The bar had a footrail and under the footrail was an inch of sawdust. Behind the bar were mirrors, bottles, two old cash registers, and three busy bartenders. Over the bar, hanging from the ceiling, was a collection of rain gutters, or eave-stroughs as we called them. I could see that the ceiling



leaked badly and the rain gutters collected the water and carried it to an open window next to the alley door.

My father went to the bar, leaving me near the jukebox. I never stayed with my father in a barroom. I would usually wander around, looking at the people and reading the signs. There were never any other boys to talk to (I guess I was the only kid that spent Saturdays in bars), but sometimes a man or lady would talk to me and sometimes I would get a bag of potato chips from them. Or a bottle of pop.

I moved closer to the jukebox to listen to the music. Patti Page was singing "Allegheny Moon". I heard that song over and over again that night (it was the biggest song of the year). I read all the song titles and tried to get a free song by pushing all the buttons. I wanted to hear "God Bless America" by Connie Francis. Once, in another bar, a drunk played that song on the Jukebox. It made my eyes water and my throat hurt. I felt foolish when I thought about it.

When the Patti Page song ended, I watched the machine change records and start another song. The jukebox was like a robot with a big glass eye. Maybe it was watching me and waiting for me to put money into it. I turned away.

Over the booth next to the jukebox was a sign that said "no dancing allowed." In that booth were two men and two women. I thought the men were farmers because they wore coveralls and rubber boots. They were all drinking beer and laughing. One of the men was eating popcorn from a bag and once, when he reached for more popcorn, he grabbed a lit cigarette and put it all in his mouth. It must have burned and tasted terrible. He spit and swore and threw the popcorn bag on the floor. I wanted to pick it up, but didn't dare. One of the women in the booth smiled at me and I walked away. I was afraid she would say something to me. The man who was swearing scared me. I didn't want to talk to her if I had to be near him.

I walked down the aisle, past all the booths and all the people at the bar, until I came to the other end of the room. At the door to the alley I turned around. This end of the barroom had a sign "please spit in the sawdust". There were other signs advertising beer and whiskey. All the bars had these same signs and I had seen them all before, somewhere or another.

Like the signs, the people were all the same, too. They were no different in any bar. In all of North Olean, I only knew one drunk by sight. His name was Basil and he had sad eyes. It seemed that most of the people that talked to me, in these places, had sad eyes. A man talked to me that night, but he had happy eyes. The kind that smile.

He was drinking alone at the bar, close to the alley-side of the bar where I was standing. I saw him first. He was middle-aged and wore a blue suit with the necktie hanging halfway out of his coat pocket. I didn't like neckties, so



I thought he was smart to put his in a pocket. He had a deck of cards that he was shuffling and doing little tricks with. No one was watching him except me. Without thinking, I moved closer and stood on the footrail next to his barstool. I didn't say anything, but the man saw me. He shuffled his cards again, buried the ace in the deck and then pulled it off the top of the deck. I had never seen card tricks before. Once again he shuffled the cards and this time he fanned them face down in front of me. "Pick a card, any card. Don't let me see it." I took a card. "Look at it," he said, "Don't forget what it is. Good. Now, put it back in the deck." He shuffled again, cut the deck into two piles and pulled the top card from the second pile. "Your card was the nine of clubs, wasn't it?"

"I don't know. What's a club?" He showed me a club, spade, diamond, and a heart. Then he did some other tricks for me. I asked him how long it took to learn all those tricks and he told me, "A couple of years. It took me a couple of years. Of course I didn't have anything better to do at the time." Then he asked me if I knew any magic tricks and I said that I didn't.

"Well," he said, "let me do a trick for you and then we'll see if you can learn how to do it. First, we'll take the four jacks out of the deck. You hold them while I shuffle the deck real good. Now I'll put the deck, face down, on the bar, like this, and you put those four jacks you're holding face down on top of the deck. Now, this is the bank and the four jacks are on the roof of the bank. Now, the first jack sneaks into the bank through the roof." He pulled the top card off the deck and placed it in the deck, a few cards from the bottom. "Next, the second jack sneaks into the bank." He put the second card in the deck, halfway from the bottom. "Now, the third jack goes into the bank while the fourth jack stays on the roof to watch for the cops." He buried the third card in the deck and left the fourth card on top. "While the three jacks were robbing the bank, the jack on the roof saw some cops coming and he yelled out to his friends to tell them that they had better get back on the roof and get away from there." One jack was on top of the deck and the other three were buried in the deck. "Let's help them escape. We'll put this napkin over the deck and say a magic word. Do you know a magic word?" I didn't. "That's all right," he said, "I know one, salt-n-beer nuts!" He pulled the napkin off the cards. "Let's see if they all got back to the roof." He took the first four cards off the top of the deck and showed them to me. Four jacks. It was a great trick and he taught me how to do it, after I promised not to tell anyone else how it was done.

I was learning how to play blackjack, a few minutes later, when my father came down to that end of the bar to tell me that we were leaving. The man gave me his deck of cards and said, "The good fairy puts a fresh deck under my pillow



every night." My father laughed and I said goodbye to the man in the blue suit.

I followed my father, through the noisy crowd, out to the lobby. When the wooden bar door closed behind us, I asked, "Dad, do you know who that man was? The one that gave me the cards."

"Yeah, I've heard of him."

"Where did he learn all about playing cards and magic tricks?"

"In prison. That's where he came from."

A few weeks later I saw that the old Central Hotel was boarded up and closed. Condemned, my father said. It was still boarded up, empty and lonely, ten years later when I left home.

December of 1971, I went back to New York, to Olean, to look up some people. Someone told me that my old friend, Bill, was in town, too. Bill has owed me five bucks for years and hell will freeze over before I forget it. He was supposed to be spending a lot of time in the Central Hotel.

I drove down Sullivan Street, parked at the railroad station, and walked up to North Union Street. There was a brand new neon sign hanging from that old building: "New Central Hotel". The main doorway was wider and had two swinging glass doors. Inside, the place looked like someone had torn the guts out and started over. The lobby was half its old size; the carpet was new, the walls panelled and there was a suspended ceiling with fluorescent lights. There weren't any stuffed chairs, either. High class joint. You don't loiter in the lobby. If you want to come in off the street and relax, you have to go into the bar and buy a drink. Even the glass display case was gone. The only recognizable thing in the place was the circular registration desk. The wrinkled lady sitting behind it looked like a streetwalker that had been forced out of business by old age.

I went through another glass door to the barroom. It was much larger, taking up what was once the other half of the lobby. The booths were gone, replaced by little round tables. About forty kids, nineteen or twenty years old, were silently watching the same color television. It looked like a basketball game was on. You would think that the fate of the world depended on that basketball game. I made my way to the bar, but the bartender was glued to the television. I almost had to set myself on fire to get his attention. What's so damn important about a basketball game?

When I got my beer, I stood there in the silence. Every once in a while, everyone would cheer or sigh at the same time. Wouldn't it be nice if they could all fart at the same time? So this is what became of the old Central Hotel. A hangout for advanced adolescents. They looked like a respectable bunch. The bar looked respectable, too. Sort of high class. No mirrors, no pigs feet jars, no "Slim Jims", no



beer signs, and the bartender wore a necktie. But looks aren't what make a bar. People give a bar character. I could see that this bar didn't have much character anymore.

Bill wasn't in the place, nor anyone else I knew. I finished my beer and left. And I hope the television set blew up before the basketball game was over.

Carol Sadewasser

OLD MAN ALONE

In a small room  
An old man was late for Sunday.  
I watched while  
He wept  
Like the waves underneath a bridge  
Not far beyond.

His eyes traced  
A thin crack,  
Much like sorrow,  
Across the wall.  
I heard the wind out of breath  
Making hurricane sounds.

He talked of ruffles and white gloves  
And thunder and oak leaves  
Of Sundays before.  
Chalk dust memories.

Pat his hand, please,  
Powder for his eyes.  
They glisten too much.  
They glisten with age.  
Old man put on your hat,  
Sit in my chair.  
There is nothing so sad  
As the memory of stones.



D. M. Henderlong

Thank-You

At the called-for-time  
cruel intellect stands and waves good-bye  
to the old-time faces of ridiculous remembrances.  
And even written and spoken words issue forth with  
a crass vulgarity.  
My mind is like a middle finger to the world,  
given immorally,  
to regurgitate its unreasonable reasoning.

And even as I speak,,  
I hate the words which try to relate  
and somehow get lost in the confusion.

Swearing and such grieve offenses  
against the Almighty High  
are said to turn my soul inside out.  
And even as I say them I tremble,  
like a coward mouse father,  
for fear that I shall be condemned forever  
by one who's not there.

And even those words are afraid of connotation.  
It's such an inside screaming feeling  
like stomachs bursting forth to spill  
nothing but invisible blood.

Go ahead and kill yourself.  
I won't cry  
you taught me not to care long ago.  
You and your wanted, self-inflicted wounds.

--

The lone swan calls to  
the moon as he swims slowly  
through icy water.

-- Susan Mills





JOE PLESEK



Joseph

This may seem an unusual story, but it's not - really. It simply deals with a small family, the Joneses. There was nothing strange about this family. They were poor, but times were hard. They lived on a lonely hilltop, but many people have lived on lonely hilltops. In fact, the only noteworthy member of this entire family was Joseph, an eight year old idiot.

Now this Mr. Jones was not brilliant, but he was able to adjust to his environment. He supported the clan by collecting a meager existence from several sheep and a large garden. And since he was self-sufficient, he had no reason to disturb the inhabitants of the near-by village. But, as a result, the superstitious town folk came to regard the hill people as demons, devils, and witches.

Every once in a while, several brave and adventuresome lads would venture to the lonely hilltop for a look. On one such occasion, they saw Joseph walk into a tree and fall to the ground. The little fool stared at the tree, climbed to his feet, and then walked into it again. The laughter caught Joseph's attention, and he started for the happy sounds. The boys' joy soon fled as they watched the hideous creature approach. The head was immense, the teeth were too wide, and a combination of dirt, blood, and bruises chilled the marrow of their bones. They picked up stones to destroy the monster, but fear made them run, throwing their weapons blindly.

Joseph just watched the panic. One of the projectiles hit his forearm, and he looked at the wound with tear-soaked eyes. Finally, when the shouts could no longer be heard, he shook his head and couldn't understand. He noticed an injured lark near the side of the path and kicked it. But that didn't help at all.

After a while he could feel that it was time to eat, so he began walking in the direction of home. His mother screamed when she saw him enter. She made several noises and held him in her arms. All that Joseph could do was give a hollow smile. She washed the dirt off, dressed the wounds, and kissed him warmly. Shortly Mr. Jones arrived, and he too made some noises. Then everyone had some porridge, and Joseph was happy.

One morning, the idiot awoke before daybreak. He looked around the hazy room and saw that his parents were still sleeping. Quietly, he walked outside and leaned against the nearest tree. He saw the huge red ball that always sits on the other hill. This time he watched it move above the trees and change into a bright yellow ball that hurt his eyes. He also saw the colors of the sky change as fast as the bright ball.

He glanced toward the field and saw a bird pull something from the ground. It then flew to its tree, sat in its nest, and put its beak into the mouths of little birds. Next, it



flew in circles over the same field. This time it landed in some high grass. Joseph could see where the bird bent the blades as it entered, but it didn't come out right away. He looked for something else.

He looked in a direction that had sounds and saw the sheep drinking water from the creek. He heard them make their noises, and heard them splash in the water, and saw some of them eating grass. Something felt funny on his arm, and when he looked down, he saw a spotted lady bug. He lifted a clumsy hand to catch his pet, but the excitement gave more than enough warning. She flew away. Joseph was sad. Suddenly, he heard a sound overhead and twisted his neck in time to see a squirrel. The furry little creature jumped from this tree, to that tree, to that tree. This made him happy all over again.

He looked and saw. When his mother called, he ran for the cabin. He had no objections since these same things would be just as new to him tomorrow.

Then the time came when even Joseph could see that things were different. The grass was no longer its pretty color. It had changed into an ugly brown. And there weren't as many sheep making those funny sounds. His mother and father spent most of their time in the cabin without making any noises at all. Whenever they stepped outside, they just looked into the beautiful blue sky and shook their heads. And to top everything, he was hungry most of the time.

Finally, the day came when there were no more sheep. The meals were no longer once a day, but once every other day. Joseph cried very much.

Shortly, Mr. Jones had his family dress in their best clothes. And Joseph was so proud as the group walked hand in hand down the hill. When they got to the bottom, the fool couldn't believe his eyes. There were so many houses, and so many people, and so many animals. Mr. Jones walked into the middle of everything.

The family walked to a white building that had a very sharp roof. Its doors opened, and several men walked into the street. Mr. Jones began to make noises, but he was cut off by a man in black. The man made a noise, then he pointed at the white building. Joseph's father shook his head but didn't say anything. Black Robes made an ugly sound and spit on the ground. The people, who had gathered, began yelling and spitting.

Mr. Jones reached for his son's hand and started to run. The crowd followed screaming and spitting as they drove the devils from their midst. Joseph didn't stop running until he returned to the cabin. Mrs. Jones couldn't stop crying. Her husband walked to the crude table and sat down. He just sat there, staring into nothingness. When it was time for the fool to go to sleep, he was still there.

Next evening, the Joneses had a large meal. The sight of all that food made the idiot smile. But before the dinner



was completed, several townsmen pushed the cabin door open. The men made ugly sounds, then grabbed the poor farmer. Mrs. Jones fell into sobs, but Joseph followed because it was the first time anyone had ever come to visit.

The men took Mr. Jones a short distance into the forest and tied his hands. Joseph's father tried to break away, but they were too strong. One of the men tossed the end of a rope over a branch. The other end was placed over the poacher's head. Suddenly, the townsmen pulled, and Mr. Jones kicked in midair. The men made more loud noises, than tied the rope. After the villagers left, Joseph walked to the tree and looked up at the man swaying motionlessly in the evening breeze. He shook his head and couldn't understand.

Much time passed and again Joseph saw that things were different. He had enough food, but his mother had changed. She never made noises anymore, and she didn't look the same. She had become very thin, and the work changed her appearance completely. But she was good to Joseph, and he was happy.

After a while the town children began making a habit of observing the Joneses from a distance. Once in a while, the braver ones would even attempt mischief. But Mrs. Jones could easily frighten them away with a broom.

So again the village became aware of the hill people. The children made horrible stories of a witch and a young ogre. Now, the town could no longer ignore the threat.

Late one afternoon, a band of men marched up the hill. They found Mrs. Jones preparing dinner, and after a short search, they found her son sitting on a near-by log. He had been watching the sun begin its slow retreat into the west. The villagers frightened him, and he began to cry. With both prisoners securely bound, the group marched back to town.

The men led the devils into the stockade and slammed the door. The idiot didn't like the smell or the darkness and began to cry. Mrs. Jones held him near and patted his head, but Joseph was still afraid.

In the morning two men opened the door and found their only prisoners huddled in a corner. The guards made the ugliest sounds that the fool had ever heard, and this frightened him all the more. Then the men were rough as they pushed the Joneses from the shack.

Joseph was happy that he was forced from the stockade because it was a beautiful day. The bright shining sun and the brilliant blue sky made him smile. And all the fresh air in the world greeted him as he walked with these strange people. He was no longer afraid.

The guards led them into a house with a very large room. There were many people, and many chairs, and a man in black. The man in black sat behind a huge desk, and there was even a large box in the center of the room. The people stopped chatting as Joseph and his mother entered, and the judge started beating the desk. Then all was quiet as the guards led their prisoners to the box.



Inside the box, Joseph was lost. His mother could see out, but he was too short. He could only hear the muffled noises of the people in the room. He noticed a grasshopper in the bottom of the box. It seemed to want its freedom, but it couldn't find the right way out. It would jump and hit the wall on one side, then jump and hit the wall on the other side. After it tried several more times, the fool picked it up and looked at it. He laughed because it did funny things with its face, and it spit a brown liquid. Joseph saw that it was going to jump, so he opened his hand towards the open back of the box. He watched it jump and hop out the door. He was happy.

The idiot looked up and could see that his mother was crying. He couldn't understand that because no one was touching her. He heard noises but no ugly sounds. Suddenly the noises stopped, and some men grabbed his mother. She didn't scream or anything, but they dragged her out. Joseph began to cry, but he too was harshly pulled from the box.

The Joneses were taken to the center of town. The little fool was tied with a rope around his neck, and he was put on a wooden platform. The rope hurt his neck, but he looked around anyway. All Joseph could see was his mother tied to a pole in the village square. She had a very sad expression on her face, and her eyes focused on him. She didn't make any noises. She just looked.

Joseph saw some men bringing sticks and wood to place before his mother. And he saw the town folk laughing, but he didn't know why. He saw a little man with a torch make noises to the crowd. Then he saw the man use the torch to light the sticks and wood. And he saw the smoke. And he saw his mother's face. It was focused on him. And she made no sound. And he couldn't understand.

And he saw the flames of the fire burn his mother's dress. And he saw her face. It was focused on him. And she didn't make any noises. She just looked at him with an expression of horror, but she made no sound. And he saw her head fall. And he saw nothing but flame. And he heard the crowd cheer. But he couldn't understand.

Then he felt a rock hit his shoulder, and he began to cry. But the tears weren't from pain, for he felt no pain. He just couldn't understand. And he felt another rock hit his neck, and another, and another, and another. Then he felt no more.

--

*Time held me green and dying  
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.*

-- Dylan Thomas  
"Fern Hill"





John York

as you are away

as you are away  
i feel the hardness  
of myself and other men  
closing in.

please  
when next we meet  
be gentle  
be patient  
help me to discover new mysteries about you  
those that as yet  
i have not found.

IF

if i were a smile  
i'd never frown.  
if i were a tear  
i'd never fall.  
or  
if i were love  
i'd never end.  
but  
i'm only a man  
and  
i frown  
i cry  
and i pray to god  
that love will not end.

Tom Joyce

History rests quietly here in the woods--  
where crumbling timbers  
and tired silence  
play in the cobweb of spring.



Kimm McLaughlin

The Days of Kerry's Dancing

"I see you! I see you! Run Sheep Run!"

"Run Kerry, run! He'll catch you!"

And away she ran laughing and screaming.

"Free! I'm home free!" she cried hugging the tree that had been designated as "home." Kerry collapsed on the ground beneath her, stretched out on the grass as if in bed, and lay very still. She was out of breath, every muscle in her body alive and aware, ready to move. She could feel her heart pounding rapidly against her chest with the excitement of almost being caught. The wolf was gone now, seeking other victims, and she was safe. From nowhere grew an uncontrollable smile, and through the crimson leaves on the "Trees of Heaven" she could see puffs of white clouds running by. She closed her eyes and imagining them as sheep, urged them on silently; hoping they too would make it home safe.

It was not long before the shrill voices of the others were heard, the wolf shouting with delight as he flushed out his prey. Soon all of the sheep came running home laughing and stumbling over each other to touch the tree. Then, as if by an inaudible command, everyone sat down on the grass simultaneously to catch their breaths, and for a while all that could be heard was the panting of little lungs. Finally Tommy, the wolf, broke the silence disappointed at not making someone else "it."

"Let's not play this anymore," he started. "I'm always the wolf and never can catch anybody. I want to do something else." Suddenly he stood up and mounted his horse. He hopped about the miniature paradise grunting and neighing from the back of his throat, then he trotted off. Although no one over twelve could truthfully admit to seeing them, the children's horses were forever present, and soon everyone was galloping after Tommy with cries of:

"Mine's the fastest!"

"My horse is prettiest!"

"I'll race you back!"

The autumn wind, brisk and cool, gusted noisily through the trees; yet the afternoon sun remained warm. The sturdy horsemasters bounced along, posting over rivers, bridges, and cliffs of mud-holes, puddles, and broken twigs and branches made by last night's rain. Some of the children rode frisky paliminoes, while others were on their pinto ponies; and some mastered strong white stallions named Thunder or Lightning.

Kerry trotted steadily after the others on her Lady



Grey, never the fastest, but gentle with a thick black mane and rich brown eyes. Rarely did she change any one of Lady Grey's features as the others often did with their pets from day-to-day. She speeded up now to clear the hedge, and as she jumped over a damp, rotted log, she felt the wind tugging wildly at her; trying to pull her loose from the ground and send her bouncing up to the clouds. If only it might happen; if she could break loose and fly away! How everyone would cry!

"Look! Look at Kerry! She's flying! She's flying! There she goes!"

"Kerry! Jamie! Come home!"

Down on the ground Mother was calling; calling her home. Someone was always calling her home at the most important times. The group of children scattered in various directions, Kerry and Jamie going along the path that led towards their yard. Jamie still rode his stallion, thumping its invisible flanks. However, Kerry was walking clumsily, out of breath with her legs sore from running. She barely had enough strength in her arms to open the backdoor. She sat down in a kitchen chair, letting her head drop to the table. Her mother noticed Kerry's exhaustion.

"What's the matter, Muffin? Are you tired?"

"Just out of breath. Mommy, my chest hurts."

"Kerry honey, I wish you wouldn't try so hard to keep up with the others. You just don't have the same strength. You're too delicate, Muffin," she smiled kissing the little girl on the cheek. "Now go wash your hands, and tell that Jamie to, too." Kerry crawled out of the chair and walked slowly from the room, her face noticeably flushed from the exercise; yet the bright pinkness worried her mother. It made the rest of her appear so pale. However, the doctors who had examined Kerry weren't at all worried; she was just underweight and delicate.

Mrs. Finney's eyes followed her Muffin from the room. Such a beautiful child; dark eyes, golden brown hair, but so thin, so tiny. The thinness made Kerry so fragile; gave her an image of a glass-blower's figurine. She was such a wisp of a creature that Mrs. Finney became concerned when she would go out to play on windy days; she was afraid that a strong wind might just blow her away. She wanted to fold her up and gently hide Kerry in her apron pocket.

In less than an hour every Finney in the house had been located and was seated at the supper table. From his highchair little Dennis gurgled along with the evening grace in his animated fashion, causing everyone to smile. The meal began with Mrs. Finney excusing herself to take hot bisquits from the oven, while her husband admonished four-year-old Kevin about whistling at the table. Mrs. Finney returned and began to fill the childrens' plates







with one hand, grasping for Dennis with the other who was just short of toppling over the arm of his chair onto the floor.

"Gail is going to start dancing lessons next week," said Kerry beginning the conversation. "She's going to have slippers just like a real ballerina."

"That's nice, Muffin," answered her father reaching for one of Mrs. Finney's bisquits. "Mary, I do believe you make the best bisquits in the world." Mrs. Finney smiled, losing count of how many times her husband had repeated those same words in the past.

"Me and Tommy are going to build a fort in that big old tree by the creek," remarked Jamie.

"Me, too!" sounded a little voice from Kevin's chair.

"Tommy and I," corrected their mother. "And I don't want you to play near that water, especially in trees. You could fall in and hurt yourself, or worse!"

"I think you and Tommy..."

"Me, too!" added Kevin. Mr. Finney laughed.

"And Kevin," he continued, making a point of including the little boy. "You might find a nicer tree to build a fort in closer to home, don't you suppose? And say Jamie, I just might find some time to give you a bit of help."

"Okay!" exclaimed his son.

"Can I take dancing lessons too, Daddy?" interrupted Kerry. "I want to. I want to be a ballerina."

"Well, I don't see any problem," Mr. Finney replied looking at her now. The tiny face was smiling at him through raspberry jelly, though it was her eyes that captured his glance. They were so large, so deep, he was thinking.

"We'll look into it, Muffin."

## Two

"Come on, Kerry, or you'll be late!"

Kerry buttoned her jacket over the leotard, picked up the tiny slippers, and ran down the hall.

"I'm coming!" she called.

"I hope you wore your sweater underneath your coat," warned her mother. "You don't want to catch a cold."

"I'm all right, Mommy. Let's go." The two hurried towards the car. The night air was bitter, as if it could snow any minute.

"Did you practice your steps, Muffin?"

"Sure." It was four months now since Kerry had started dancing lessons, looking forward to each one. However, she never would enjoy practicing; it made her tired. Her lack of practice made her feel as though she wasn't doing as well as the other girls. Often she became worn out when they would still be working, and had to stop for a rest.



Mrs. Finney stopped the car to pick up Kerry's friend Gail, and soon the girls were standing at the long bar in front of the mirror, ready for first position. A few weeks later, Kerry's mother came in to watch the children rehearsing for their first recital. Kerry finished the dance weak and out of breath. Mrs. Finney noticed her face flushed pink; that same unhealthy glow.

"Mrs. Finney, may I speak with you?" It was Kerry's instructor. "I really don't know how to put this, but I think that you should consider taking Kerry out of dancing for awhile. I know she's a very intelligent child and she does try hard, but she can't keep up. Dancing is an extremely strenuous activity; it's just too much for her. Kerry is so delicate."

Kerry cried a little when she found out that she had to stop her dancing lessons. She had wanted to be a ballerina. However, her father had purchased an old piano and felt that Kerry should learn to play it. The next week she was smiling again as she looked forward to her first piano lesson. She soon discovered that if she ever wanted to be good at the piano she would have to practice; just like dancing. It was not as bad though, for this type of work never made her out of breath or caused her legs to hurt.

Four years passed, and Kerry was still playing. Jamie had mastered the flute in the years between his broken bones, for he was always falling out of tree-forts. Now the two of them often performed together. Sometimes Gail would come over and dance for them. She was very talented, Kerry would think watching the graceful leaps and twirls. It reminded her of how the wind had so often attempted to pull her loose from the ground. She pretended that it was she and not Gail dancing. Yet she no longer desired to be the great ballerina, but a pianist.

By the next month, Kerry was lying in a hospital bed. She had been running fevers for a long time, and the doctors had sent her to the hospital for tests. Kerry did not like the stay at all, though she complained to no one. They always seemed to serve yellow beans at supper, and the nurses would scold if she didn't eat them. But she had always hated yellow beans, and didn't see why she should eat them now. Examining the holes in her arm, she thought of those awful needles. They came every morning to steal some of her blood. Yet worse than this, worse than everything else, Kerry was going to have to remain in the hospital over her birthday!

Next Wednesday she would turn eleven; all by herself. Of course her parents would be here, but none of her friends could come to visit; they were too young. However, the floor nurses remembered Kerry's birthday and brought her cake and ice cream. Her mother and father came bringing presents and good wishes from all of her friends at school.



"We have some good news, Muffin," said her mother. "Your teacher says she will pass you into seventh grade next year. You know you have had more absences from school this year than is usually allowed. But you're so smart, you'll make it. You won't even have to go back to school at all this term." It had never occurred to Kerry that she might have had to repeat the sixth grade next year. That was unthinkable!

"But I do want to go back to school this year!" she cried.

"We'll see, Muffin."

Kerry cried herself to sleep that night, not understanding why she had to be sick. However she was soon home again, recovering her strength rapidly. Some months later she couldn't even remember her tears.

### Three

It was now eleven years since Kerry had ridden her Lady Grey. She had not remembered the horse for a long time, and now wondered where she had gone off to. Maybe she belonged to somebody else today, with a new name and perhaps a different color; still, it would be the same Lady Grey underneath. Invisible horses are universal; one person can't hold them forever. Kerry discovered she was crying at this bit of philosophy, and suddenly she laughed aloud at the silliness of shedding tears over an imaginary horse.

A young doctor, probably an intern, entered the room. Kerry was in the hospital again, however she considered herself an adult now, and if she refused to eat any yellow beans, there was little they could do.

"Very handsome," she mused to herself, hardly paying any attention to the questions he was asking. They all asked the same things and by now she could give the answers in her sleep.

"When did you first discover this difficulty you have with walking?" he questioned.

"Oh, I guess about four years ago, when I was fourteen." she began to repeat the whole story. She told him how she would fall down if she tried to run, that she couldn't go up or down stairs without holding on to the railing, and of how she often dropped things. She would lose her balance and wasn't able to lift one foot off the ground and stay standing.

"People must think I'm high on something when they notice how I walk," she laughed. Kerry could live with the fact that her running and jumping days were over; there wasn't much time these days to go galloping off into the wind on a pretend pony. Yet even walking was becoming a chore, and she now realized that she was losing her ability to play the piano. This hurt her deeply. Long ago she had given up the idea of becoming a great pianist, however one



of her greatest pleasures was her talent in music. This was gradually diminishing, and she could hide the loss of coordination from others, yet not from herself. She had resolved to quit playing completely, however she found that she couldn't give it up.

The doctor made her walk for him, then he left. Kerry switched on the television and watched a group of little girls dancing the Irish Jig. Their small legs pranced and twirled to the bagpipe reels, as if gravity had no hold on them. Music from the sour pipes filled the room:

"Oh the days of the Kerry dancing, gone alas with our youth too soon."

The words of the song remained even after she had turned the set off. She thought of her old ballet shoes, so delicate.

"What do you want to be when you grow up, little girl?" someone had asked. The answer was simple then.

"A ballerina."

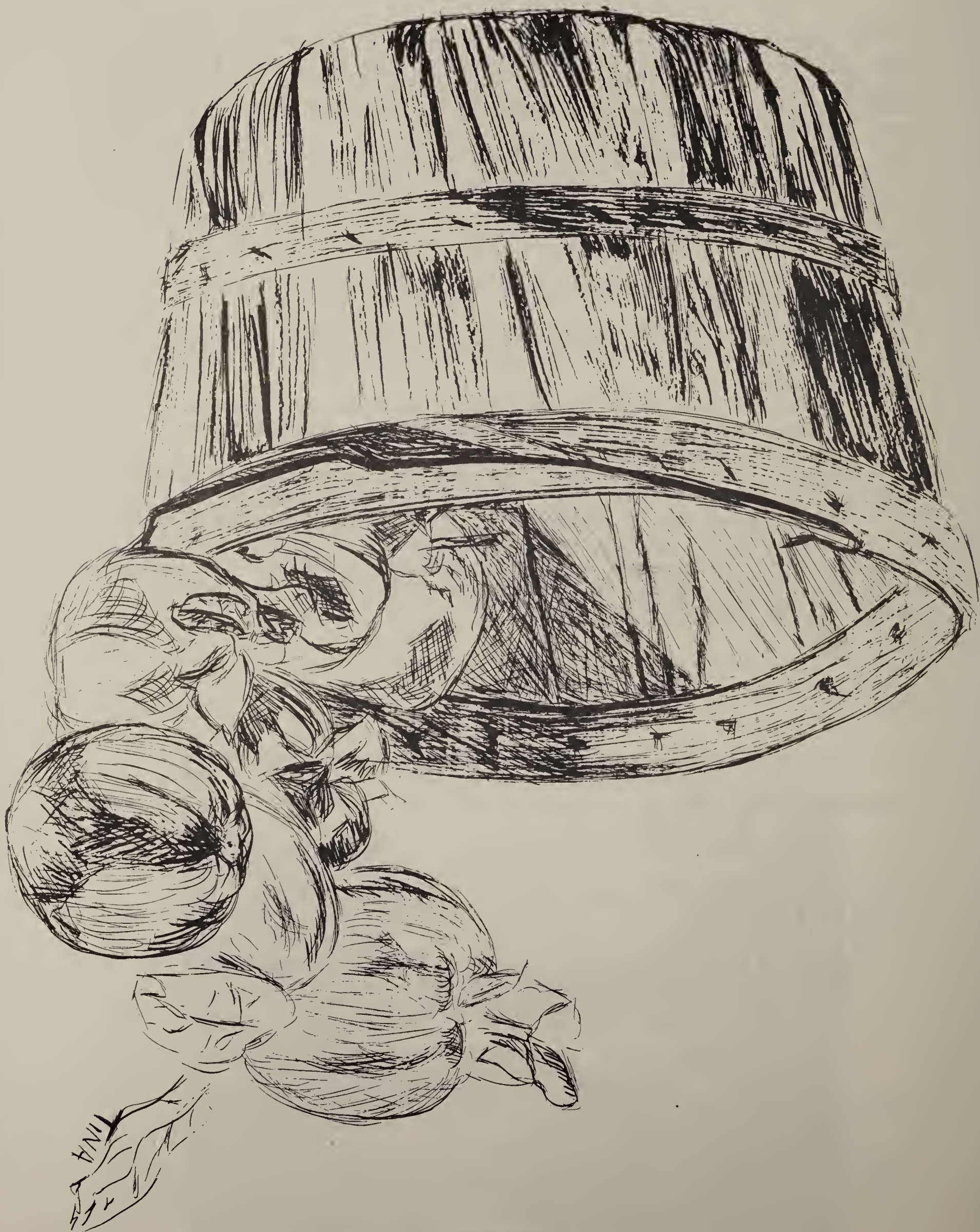
Kerry leaned back onto the pillow picking up a book. She heard voices filtering through the open window:

"Run Sheep Run!" they cried. "Free! I'm home free!"

Instead of reading, Kerry watched the clouds through the window. With open eyes and perhaps a smile, she imagined them as giant sheep. Silently she urged them on, hoping they would make it home safe.









Barbara Stahura

Unexpectedly, your voice,  
alone  
out of the many  
I had wanted to hear  
but would not search for.

It was like  
feeding marshmallows  
to the sun-dappled giraffes,  
or waking up  
envisioning the rain,  
but finding the sun.

#

You chide me  
with your moralizing eyes,  
or think I'm just  
a little strange,  
or that it's just a phase  
I'm going through.

I can see it in your face,  
your waiting for me to  
change back

to what I was:  
Frightened.  
"Sensible."  
Unmetamorphosized.

Think of how the caterpillar feels  
when he opens his eyes and  
finds he can fly.

Fred Barton

Rain Thoughts

Rain,  
I used to like those days.  
I had to play the game though.  
"Mom, can I go out?"  
"Of course not, it's raining."  
That's what I wanted to hear.  
I'd shut myself up in my room  
and explore my secret holding closet.  
Perhaps to find a toy soldier,  
a veteran of past bloody struggles for  
my bed-spread plain  
and pillow mountain.  
Or perhaps the wheel of some long forgotten car.  
Memento of a screaming firecracker crash  
on my race track floor.  
Or perhaps I would turn out the light  
and just sit listening to the rain  
whispering at my window.  
That was the best.

Christine Webb

First Prize - Poetry  
Sigrid Stark Contest

De-Liberate Me

Liberated?  
Liberated?!  
Now, I don't need no liberatin'  
I been liberated all my life.

Streets and alleyways fill with fatherless children  
left me to rear by sweat or cunnin'  
'cause your husband stopped mine from realizin' a man's dream.

Granny? Why she was so liberated that on her 35th  
birthday she died of sunstroke 'fore her and  
Grampa could collect their two dollars for the three  
hundred pounds they'd picked that day.

Legend has it she was such a good worker  
she'd clean a stalk with one swipe of her  
leathered left as she squished yellow and  
green striped army worms under her toughened toes.

They tell me she'd rareback her head in  
supplication to the god of harvest and  
chuckingly chant,

"Shine, sweet sun. The hotter  
you gits, the better I likes to pick."

My Mama? Well, she ran free and undiapered in the day-care-  
center of the rows.

Liberated?  
Liberated?!  
Liberate my man, four hundred plus years in the comin'  
A little de-liberatin' is what I need.

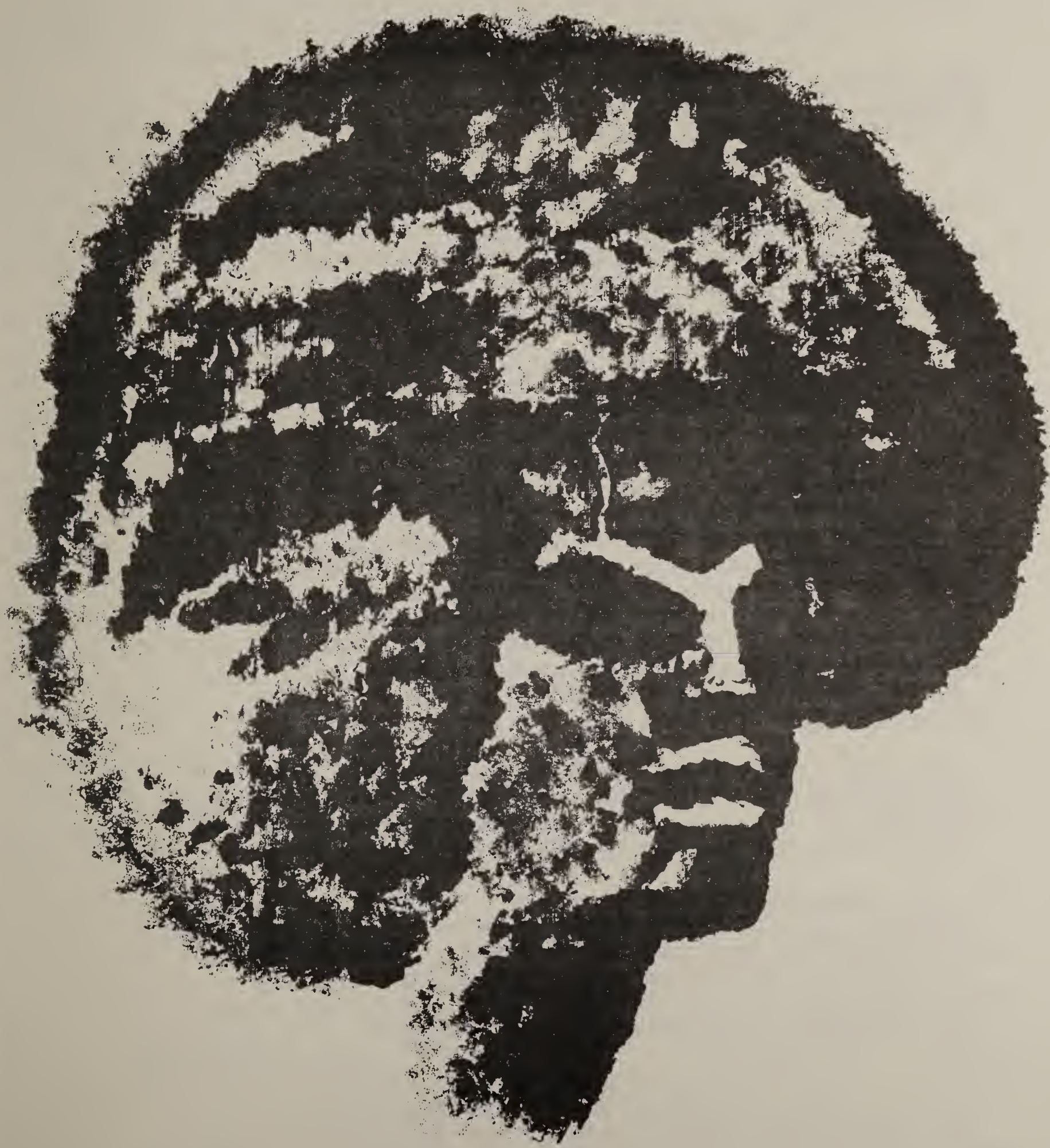
Joe Kaminski

•  
What Price? Freedom

Find the price of freedom  
Mother Nature's only child  
Many people tried to seize her,  
But on she goes, running, wild.

Find the price of freedom,  
Find it before she flies,  
And when a bullet went through her head,  
All her children died.







Crimean Solcrom

From Life (I)

(Let those of Triangulum speak  
to those of Coma Berenices-  
and share the common element:  
hydrogen.)

I am the hoary bang that spurred the worlds  
Like hail from a tempest's scorn  
To haunt the tracks and yards of men's minds;  
My bosom sings the timelessness of Life,  
Ye time setters on the earth:  
I am filled with thoughts that Eternity sends  
And flush at the procession of Life  
I have brought forth, with neither thought nor will.

I roll untamed through the stained heavens,  
The remnants of my heart struggle  
With ceaseless motion, un-entwining their  
Countless arms and legs in gay hope  
Of taking Form, and singing the Harmony  
That to the mind is golden.

I grind and spin, with piercing eyes  
Clasp the Universe, that I call mine;  
Expand outward, to Nature's brandish sword,-  
Along the dizzy, fretted road  
And bridge gaps that to man lay subtly hidden.

I skim the clusters of new born babes,  
Sprinkling them with the stardust of their ancestors;  
And speak to these lovely, untainted luminaries  
With the breath of my tongueless presence.

No star ever shines dead  
Through scattered clouds at night,  
And the earth's-sun does not welter  
In its own death-light  
For I penetrate every Sunset  
And suspend its course one day  
Longer than the next.

I bathe in the glow of a hundred billion suns,  
All purple and white, crimson and gold;-  
And kiss the nightly airs with ebullience  
While young lovers stand embracing  
Underneath the bowers of my womb.

I am the eloquent earth,  
Yet a grain of sand!



I am the system of nine orbs and a yellow sun  
Yet the first glimpse of minute protoplasm!  
I am the entwining, island universe,  
Yet a mutant called virus!

I crawl through the caverns deep,  
Passed darkened corridors  
And around winding bends  
Leading into raging seas of foam:  
I Create, I Destroy, I Annihilate man's time,  
Yet I rise from my own Cloud  
And Build the Universe all over again with my other Hand!

### Man Is A Bird

Man is a bird-  
"Kill it! Kill it!" screamed the young  
lad. "Kill the thing before it gets away!"  
Half-buried in the desert sand...  
that stretches mile after lonesome mile  
Into the region known as  
No Man's Land.  
"Give me the stone! The stone, give it to  
me! It can't move! Now is my chance! I'll hit it  
in the left wing!"  
Only his head remains, the rest beneath the  
sand, a head shaved hairless-  
the bald ace,  
One eye plucked out,  
The other a pool of tears.  
A set of dentures about to  
collapse,  
lips parched-in the noon day sun.

"I hit it! I hit it! Right in the left wing!  
Look at it bleed! Look at it bleed!"  
His awry visage, now...shapeless,  
oozing with blood from just  
Above the right eye.  
"I hit it! Look at the thing bleed! I think  
it's gonna die!"  
Slowly fading...fading, the visage crumbles  
to the sand...how sublime!  
"It's dead! I've killed it! Iknew I could  
do it."  
What remains is the back of his head.





Nada Devetak

Progress

Bulldozer, Bulldozer dosey doe  
Round and round my head you go  
in a ritual dance, a fateful ride  
Trying to smash the thoughts inside.

They can't stand long, these dreams in my head  
better to crush them, knock them down instead  
and build a form of glass and steel  
and make believe the thoughts are real  
and not merely dead plants sown  
By builders who have love outgrown  
and say tis better to love Man, a girl, a boy  
with pre-fab parts, easy to destroy  
and not made to last with mortar and brick.  
Girls be bitches and men be pricks  
and build your houses with glass and shining foil  
and make no basements in Lovings soil  
out on Earth's surface of sand so with the wind you'll move,  
No need to stay and care, or your love to prove.

Bulldozer, Bulldozer dosey doe,  
I possess the deed to my mind you know  
So you have no legal right to come around  
and try to tear my walls down.  
But the Joke's on you if you somehow succeed  
for from my mind a secret passage leads  
to a sheltering heart with walls so thick  
they cannot be shattered by the souls of the sick.

D.M. Henderlong

a reflection

(from "It's getting to be too hard")

I'm like a note on a piano.  
Just a scattered fragment  
of a sullen melody,  
played in a velvet-curtained room of a man  
too rich to be happy  
Yes, a note that gathers dust  
that loses all meaning and direction until  
played once again.  
A note that needs constant tuning  
to hold its melodious soundings,  
forever changing but always the same note.

Crimean Solcrom

A Wave Revisited

I

Who is your god, city man?  
Where city man? In the P-house?  
Talk of stark realities, city man, all you  
friends of j.p. sartre.

Split asunder, city man, that's the land  
of 5th Ave and Main,  
Where the metal heaps upon-jumbled heap-  
And the gloomy buildings  
Cast shadows on you all day.

See the star spangled banner flutter  
in the smog,  
Those (thralls) walking the streets  
With them 'I don't give a damn' eyes.

See those street people?  
They all have their ways,  
The austerity of their voices,  
The indifference of their smiles,  
The healthful vigor of Californian prime,  
The countenance of a swine.

II

Who are you Mass Media man?  
Your bleak faces look all the same,  
Speak to me, man, not of your irreconciliations  
But of your dreams.

Look at it:  
The City's Voice is a crying graveyard  
of living dead,  
Walking dead...  
Running dead...  
Sitting dead...  
The City's Voice is like a roaring Solitude!  
(that never dies).

Languid feet  
Unable to Carry On, estranged feet  
Asking only for a clean, soft bed.

Nature's Observatory this bleeding  
of human flesh,  
Piecemeal the (street walker) dies



But he doesn't really know why,  
He doesn't even care...

Listen carefully and you can hear:

"O, tell me, is it come? Death,  
quietus, is it upon me yet?"

Bring on the Expeditors! The well-groomed Expeditors!  
And they will show you the way:

"We are all machine shop made,  
When it's going to stop, we do not know,  
Where it will end, we really can't say."

Let the Expeditor speak of the daedal Man  
(Fine head for love, American Style).  
The pinion Man-fastens his legs on-and  
let him roll away...and away...and away...

Twenty fine tomorrows will be like today.  
Do you see how the seasons change?  
Better a few mendacities (than none at all),  
Just to keep posterity in line.

Do you see the encroachment of factitious delight?  
Open your eyes, city dweller, what does it all mean?  
Shall I recapitulate your despair?  
Not worth a (plug nickel) because you don't care!  
But it's all around you,  
Nothing will hide it.

Russ Antczak

### VICTORY

I am alone. I stand, a solitary man, naked, afraid, on  
a carpet of green and lime white, under the upright god of  
Victory. I am alone, yet ahead are ten stalwart gladiators  
and all around me I see, I feel, seas of faces, spectrums of  
colors, all moving yet all set in their places. Voices, all  
yelling, screaming, taunting, shouting, approving, disapproving,  
all in unison. A shrill sound over-rules all the others and  
like in the wake of the plague, everyone is silent. The drabby,  
gray November sky is broken by the soft brown dot that becomes  
larger in its descending arc.

John M. Gerovac

The Six P. M. News

Through the open window, William Rivers can see the heat stream its way through the thick undergrowth and rise heavenward. And the other things he sees are not unusual: the huts of a village, a path through the jungle, the sun about to set... But his attention focuses on the shadows, and he sees the ghosts of many days past. Each shadow and each sound compounds his fatigue. Yet, being too tense to sleep, he stands at the window of his hut collecting any cool gust and accepting any cruel memory.

The silence is broken by a young native girl, "Is there more to do tonight?"

Rivers turns and yawns, "No more tonight. We both need some sleep."

Turning his attention again upon the village, he shakes his head in defiance to the tasks that lie ahead. Yet, in the same moment, his thoughts display a depression due not only to exhaustion.

"Why did I become a doctor? I could be quietly sitting at home, away from this damn slaughter, this damn revolution. Why?.."

In the silence the girl, cleaning after the evening meal, does not disturb him until she hears an unfamiliar tune.

"Chicago, Chicago, my home town..."

"What's that, doctor?"

Her voice snaps the doctor back to reality. "Oh, that... It's a song about the place I was born..."

In a tenement on Chicago's South Side, an elderly Negro woman was preparing a late meal for her husband. And as she proceeded, her mind fought the battle of family problems. At times her eyes would drift around the room then suddenly drop back to her pots. The faded paint and neglect of previous owners ruined any chance for presentable appearance. It was a horrible place to bring up children, but it was the only place available.

She heard a door open, then close, and, without a glance for recognition, realized the heavy footsteps belonged to Rufus. And today being payday, she expected a dissatisfied drunk. Even before he entered the kitchen, she heard him bellow, "Where the hell is that bastard of yours?" She turned and saw the glossy eyes and dirty work clothes of the man she had married.

Rufus glared at her for an instant then staggered



across the worn linoleum. He opened the curtain beneath the sink and produced a cheap bottle of whiskey. Finally, he returned to the table, poured himself a drink, and stated under his breath, "damn his young ass. He gonna be da death o' me yet."

"Now don' go talken' like that, Rufus, honey. Willy's gonna be a great man someday."

"Ha, not that damn loner! He gonna end up in some jail."

"But Rufus, I do my best."

"Ya best!", cutting her off, and screaming, "Then why da hell don' he go ta church no more? Why da hell ain't he been in school fo' da last week? Ya damn bastard's driven' me ta drink! I'm gonna beat him...Gonna beat him good."

"You ain't gonna touch him, you dumb son-bitch. He don' need no damn fool like you. Willy needs a father - someone he can look up to."

Rufus finished the glass and continued, "Look up to... I work my ass off at dat mill. What thanks do I get wan I gets home? A bastard who's a pain in the ass and a bitchen' old lady." Suddenly, a door slammed. "There he is! I'm gonna get him. I'm gonna beat him..."

"You stop right now!"

As Willy entered, he saw a hand slap his mother's cheek. The boy lunged forward, tripping his father. As he bent over his mother, a whiskey bottle shattered on the countertop. When he realized everything was alright, Willy ran, leaving a trail of curses down the hall.

"Bastard, son-bitch! Don' you never come back. I'm gonna kill you. I'm gonna kill," he notices his wife, then points, "Him! I'm gonna...kill...him!!!"

Seeing that her husband's energy was finally spent, she directed him to a chair. Then, as he slowly relaxed, Mrs. Rivers tearfully collected the broken pieces of glass.

"Doctor... Doctor..."

"Oh, did you say something?"

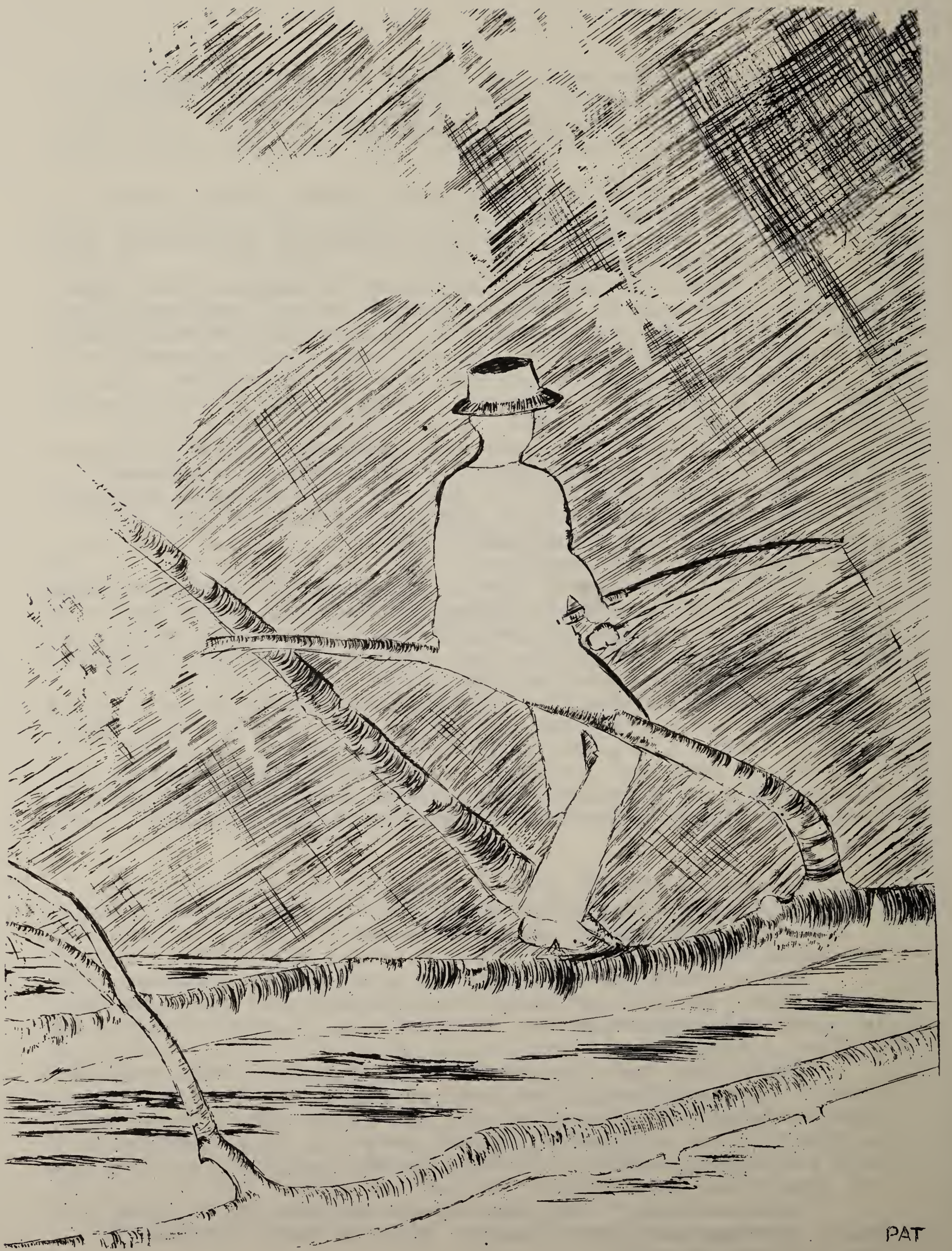
"I put your bag of medicine behind the bed - so no one would take it."

"Thank you." Suddenly Rivers realizes his neglect. "I arrived in your village only this morning, and you took me in. You even helped me set up this hut. Now what thanks do I give, I ignore you."

"Don't feel bad, doctor. I know you have many important things to think about. And the hut was no problem, the mission father abandoned it only two weeks ago. It was easy to fix for you... Doctor, I must be going to my family. It's not safe at night... There is some milk on the fire for you. Good night."

"Good evening." William Rivers watches as the girl walks through the open doorway. Then he sees nothing but the darkness beyond.







"Swing low sweet chariot,  
Commen' fo' ta carry me home..."

"Juss lissen to dat bull shit," remarked the oldest in a group of boys. "All dat damn singen'. They holy people all day on Sunday, but whores and drunks all the rest o' da time. Who they tryen' ta kid?"

The group continued to walk, climbing over rubbish, toward the rear of the United Negro Congregational Church. The leader stopped when he heard his name.

"Burnie, I got some smokes."

"Where da hell ya get 'em?"

"I got 'em from my old man when he was dressen' fo' church. He don' even know." They passed the cigarettes around.

"Ok, who's got a light... No gots...then look fo' some."

As the younger boys dispersed, Burnie noticed a figure sitting in the shadows. Curiously, he approached, but he soon recognized the silent youth.

"Hay, Willy boy, what ya got ta say?" Burnie climbed the steps and sat down next to the quiet lad. One of the guys returned with a pack of matches. "Have a smoke?" There was no response. "What's wrong, chicken?" At this Willy gave a hateful glance but finally accepted the cigarette. "Here, let me light it fo' ya, Willy boy."

In turn the others lighted up, and some began coughing. "Juss as I figured, we are getten' soft. Lissen' to that!" Shaking his head, Burnie asked, "Hay, Willy, was it true what my old lady said about you fighten' your old man?"

"How the hell'd she hear about that?"

"Man, everybody in town heard your folks bitchen'. You should'a heard my old man! What'd they say when ya got back?"

"I didn' go back. I ain't never goen' back again."

"You gonna end up in jail or somethin'."

"I don' give a damn!"

"Man, we sure could use you in da gang. You ain't afraid of nothin'."

"Nah!"

"What's 'a madder, Willy boy?"

"I don' wanna be in no gang. I juss wanna be alone."

"You gonna be too good fo' us, or somethin'?"

"Juss bug off, man."

"Hay, boys, old Willy thinks he's too good fo' us. We's gonna teach the little man a lesson."

Burnie and Willy started to fight, but the doors suddenly swung open. The Sunday services had ended.

This time it is the pleasant aroma of heating milk that brings William Rivers back to a present reality. He walks to the fire and pours himself a cup full. Then he returns to the table and sits back to enjoy the sleep-inducing potion.

But the ghosts are still marching, for his mind wanders to a time when people were not so friendly.

"Smiling old man Butcher sure had a way with words. What was it he said as the police were taking me from juvenile court? Something like, 'This'll teach you to steal, you black bastard.' I had been called a bastard before, but black bastard was kind of new.

"There were always too many people bothering you in reform school. I just wanted to be alone. The other guys wouldn't have anything to do with a bookworm, so I studied.

"I graduated at the top of my class - although the reform school diploma deadened the effect.

"The state offered a scholarship for my achievement in reform school.

"A church group sponsored me for graduate work.

"Medical school...

"Africa..."

The events of his past become a blur as he drifts into a fitful sleep.

Under the bright lights, the heated air caused the men in summerweight suits to shift uncomfortably in their chairs. That motion was shared by all save for one particular gentleman who sat quietly, with his attention focused on a pair of lights. Suddenly, the lights began to glow, and someone shouted, "On the air!"

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, this is Bob Corbett with the Six P.M. News. I'll bring you up to date on all the local, national, and international events following this word from United."

The men in their summer weight suits became still as the theme, "Fly the Friendly Skies...", filtered through the speaker system.

William Rivers wakes with a shock as a gunshot breaks through the evening's silence. He runs to the door of his hut and finds that his fears are well established. The government troops are marching on this sleepy rebel village.

An automatic reflex takes control as he races for his black bag. Confused at first, he finally remembers that the bag was hidden behind the bed. With all his strength, he lunges for the bed and begins to crawl under.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the film that you are about to see was taken by a British photographer who is covering the conflict in that African revolution. The film, without a doubt, will horrify many of you. But the editorial staff of this network feels that it is our duty to tell it like it is."

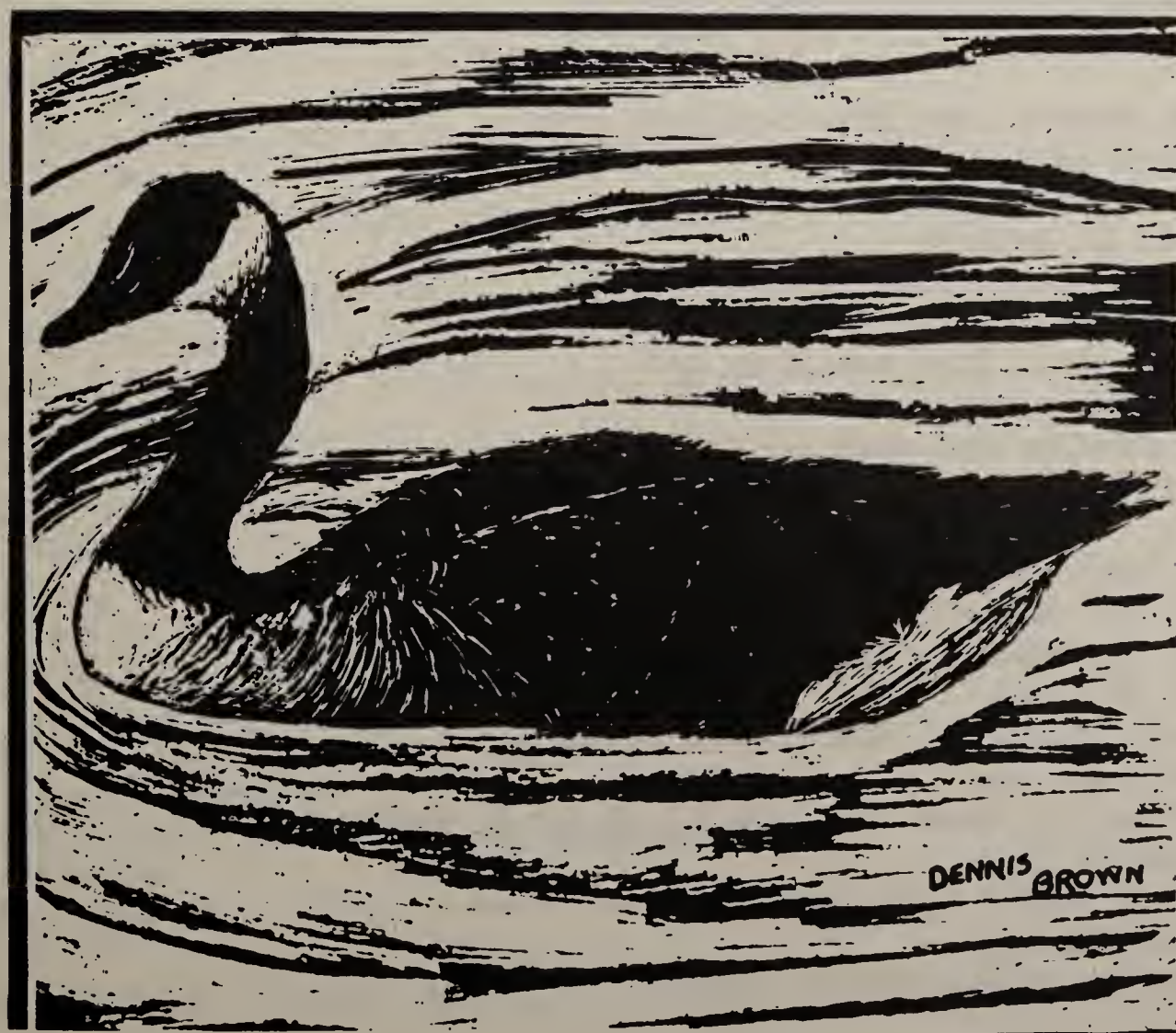


The TV camera moved from the announcer and focused on a screen in the background. The lights dimmed, and a film began.

A large Negro in uniform, carrying a rifle, rushes into an African hut and finds the only occupant attempting to hide beneath the bed. The soldier grabs the man and pushes him out the door. All the while the prisoner is trying to say something.

Outside, several other warriors begin pushing him around. The soldiers form a circle, and the villager is shoved around its interior. Suddenly, a man jumps into the center and catches the victim across the back of the neck with a machete. Then all the men began the barbaric escapade of dancing around the still twitching carcass of what recently was a man.

Finally, another soldier jumps into the circle and performs the only humanitarian act of the film as he slowly squeezes off three rounds. The last things we see are three holes in an old, faded, western styled sport shirt.



Peter R. Claussen

Second Place - Poetry  
Sigrid Stark Contest

Memories of Minnesota

memories of minnesota, the farm,  
    cast about me  
as i stand in the shower lathered  
    up in wet green soap

the hill, rivulets of grey spring rain  
    scarring its sides,  
peeling red buildings leaning into one  
    another,  
shipwrecked vegetation, old trees and  
    farm machines

the town, new auburn, some haphazard  
    middle gothic  
and brick insurance agency relief  
    with a fishing  
lake out back a short city mile

an old cemetery climbs a fenced-in slope  
    on either side  
of a serpentine wagon path, its ruts  
    gutted by cars

in the summer sometimes new boys come  
    from town to learn  
to work and fish, throw hay around,  
    sit on rusting  
junks of horse-drawn plow or disc,  
    hide in barns,  
discover love from roosters and  
    in the night  
taste tobacco and dark silence  
    for a change

these boys gather to themselves  
    in odd corners  
of the farmyard -- they stand out  
    of the way  
against the coops, the cribs, climbing  
    over fences,  
exploring the dark oily smells of dirty wooden sheds,  
    hiding from  
the dogs, watching roosters and the pigs,  
    and feeling  
the spring squirm around inside

46      they work during the day, to lose flab,



to build muscle,  
to tan on the hot, crackling fields  
baling hay, driving  
machines along the caterpillar paths  
that lead out  
and endlessly back, stacking up the glowing  
sunburned bales  
inside the loft barn and watching  
workmen bury  
drainage tile beneath the whistling cane and  
grasses in the sump

they scurry home from working fields  
elbow deep  
in sand and sweat, and wash their  
hands in  
cold white metal basins ready for  
a country supper

they play, when work is done that  
they can do,  
old familiar games of run, hide, and  
try to find,  
lurch around buildings, gallop through the grove,  
and make believe  
adventures of Robin Hood among the trees  
behind the house

they go fishing with uncles and little kids  
at secret  
fishing spots, long walks from any road,  
in lakes  
hidden far back on other people's lands,  
sparkling  
at the feet of giant leaning trees,  
and later,  
stare fearful, sick as the evening wans,  
at the day's

catch, great buckets of shadowy fish,  
with magnificent  
bug-eyes and glassy, plastic skins --  
and in trembling  
fingers hold the useless knife against  
their slimy,  
quaking, swirling bodies; until the  
night collapses.  
and from the lighted kitchen doorway  
someone  
calls them in

the hot stiff streams and green foam

strip from me  
all that lingers of grey memory  
  
it was that smell of soap that pulled  
me back  
years, times, places ago, to a soapy  
metal tub  
on the kitchen floor of a bent  
farm-house  
atop a hill higher than minnesota in the  
seventh grade  
and it is that same green soap that  
rinsing away  
leaves behind no old lives' stain  
but loses all  
winding down around into a bright enamel drain

Crimean Solcrom

From Chemistry

Time, death and the rebirth of stars  
Remain the substance of Life  
And all that we are;  
They rest unseen in the pleasant  
Smile of goodnight, in a touch  
With the hand to the cheek, or a soft  
Kiss to the lips.  
We read the newspaper, or think of our  
Friends, or the one dearest to our  
Heart - recalling scenes of passionate  
Love along the woodland rivulet;  
To bed we go, and far to the west  
A symphony is thought, a Stonehedge is built.  
We fear,  
We regret,  
We learn to accept;  
We learn to love because love is the best.  
We learn that we are a piece,  
That it is all of a piece,  
We learn that the moment of our consciousness is the  
moment of all things.



Crimean Solcrom

Ode To Mary

If I were in love, swift as the winter's chill  
And in hand, soft as the hush of the mountain stream's lips,  
Would you then have me: the Contemplator of Beauty, until

I would meet the frozen grasp of death's hungry jaws?  
Would you still have me, though face blistered  
And marked with scars, or would these flaws

Of mine, engender within your mind, withdraw  
From the truth of my pen and wish of your eyes?  
Would you not love, but hesitate and stall

Before my heart: for love cherishes not the pen  
Or wish of hyaline eyes; 'for love,' you might proclaim,  
'Cavorting in days and nights, whispers alone, as men

With breath of purple hands  
Run through my starry lips in unkept promises.  
And though matted in love, the sands

Of kiss are but grains and dust  
Washed away as the tide subsides;  
And though pillowed and adorned in heavenly dew,  
only a crust

To break, and a worldly lust to bother.'  
Mary, look into the winds and seas of time,  
There I must dance, like the father

Who cherishes his only child, but I have more  
Than one child, for my children are the stars,  
And into their dreams I hide and laps I soar:

O Mary! so beautiful as to thread a young star!  
O Mary! so endowed with Grace, that I shudder inside,  
If I could, I would dance with you to those worlds afar!

Follow the direction of my hand:  
Into other lands you could walk with me,  
To splash through the waters of a river's song,  
or on a farm

To converse with the tillers of earth's own heaven;  
The arches and bowers of the trees would be our  
companions,  
And on a moonlit hill we could sit, for seven

Days, years, or throughout Eternity's caress:  
The stars would be my Life,

And you, Maru, I would never love less,

Than I love you now. Observe the marsh,  
He wishes to give you his hand  
In helping you across; if harsh

Appear my words sometimes and mingled with the dust  
Of stars, it is the brook of love  
Emanating from your mind, that I Hope and Trust.

If I were the Morning Wind, would you hymn the song  
Of Dawn into my dissolving eyes?  
And if in your hair I would dance, would you long

For your hand to come into mine?  
If I were the earth's moon, would you hear  
The call from my bleeding light, and find  
Within the craters on my face, something to love?

If I were the nightingale, would you hear my song?  
If I were the heron, cardinal, or morning dove,  
Would you hear the plea of my endless throng?

Down, down, into the depths of a cavern's delight  
I would fly, if I could not hear  
The echoes of your songs, from my house, to sight

Of your own, I would weep, as I am  
Weeping now, this unrequited love that I bear;  
In your mind are garments that I try to hem

With unskilled hands, and I always fail:  
So with the stars I roam,  
And with the stars I sail;

Through shapeless vallies I try to sow  
With rhyming verse, thoughts that mankind  
May one day wish to know:

If by loving you I could hide, I would not love,  
But wallow in the treasure of love's worldly delight;  
But I Love, and the stars my home, I wish you at my side!

--

(i do not know what it is about you that closes  
and opens; only something in me understands  
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)  
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

-- e.e. cummings  
"somewhere i have never travelled"



Some fourteen years ago, my daily activities limited themselves to a single suburban plot of land and the shack sitting upon it. The shack was a very unsound building, seeming fragile and broken-down among the five competent homes on the block. The walls were rickety backboard nailed to somewhat sturdier two-by fours, pounded into a sand floor for support. Instead of glass in the windows, filmy, non-transparent plastic was stretched across the holes. The door was an opening in the wall facing the alley, yet it was large enough for Mr. Dee's pick-up truck to be driven in and out.

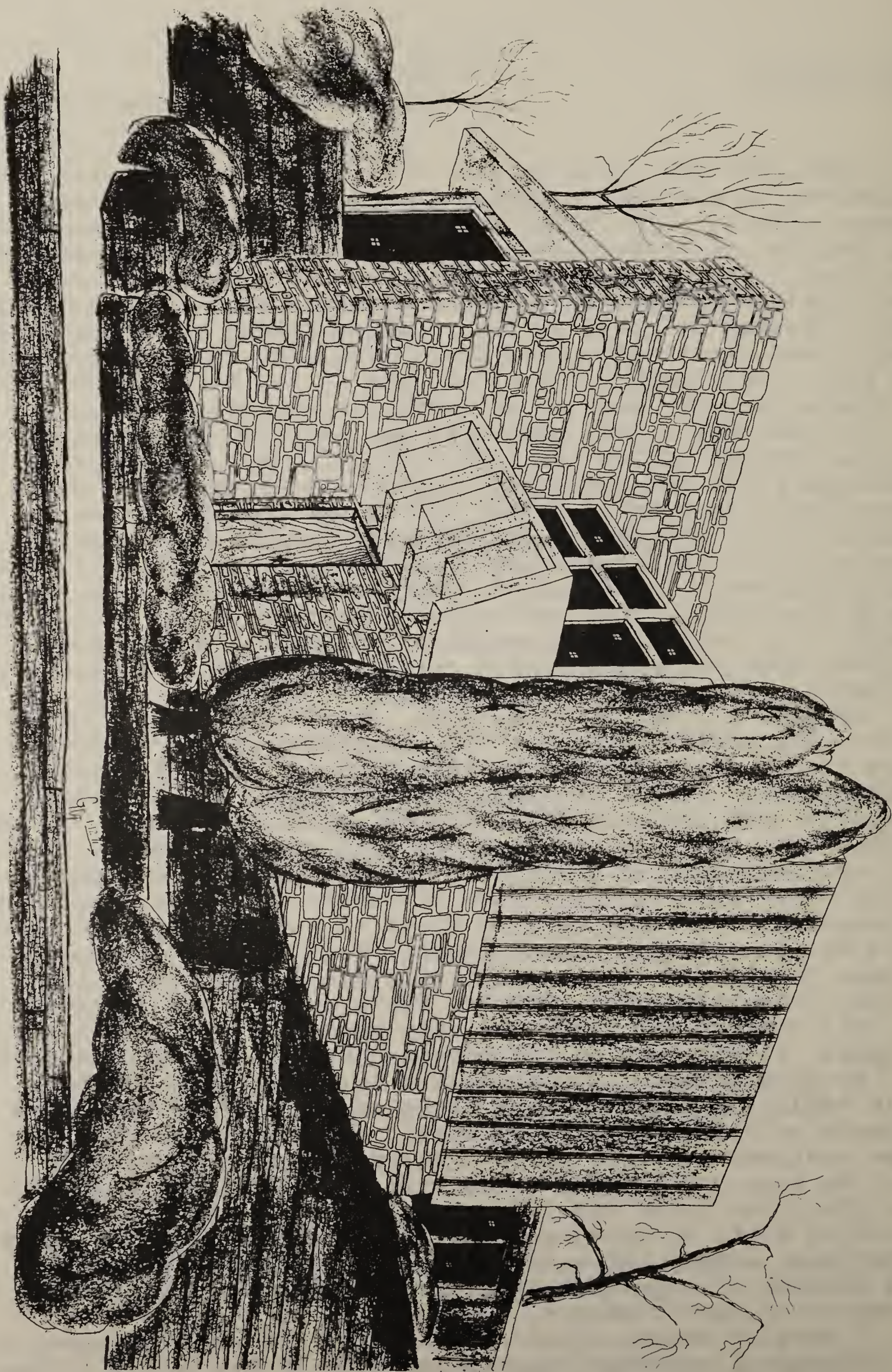
Mr. Dee was a rich carpenter who occupied the shack during the regular office hours of 9 to 5. Rich, because he possessed great quantities of punched-out silver metal coin-like objects from newly molded electrical sockets, known as slugs. And a carpenter because he had trained to be one. Physically, Mr. Dee resembled a grinning spectacled mole, what with his sharply pointed nose, wire-rimmed glasses, and a gold cap on his tooth. That gold cap was another of his claims on wealth. His unlimited reservoir of kindness and generosity bestowed upon the neighborhood children a place to play, stay, and gather precious slugs.

We were a group of five, then, consisting of my younger brother and sister and a brother and sister duo from three doors down. After breakfast, it had become perfunctory to stroll on over to see Mr. Dee. We would find him unloading materials from the back of his truck, which was usually parked halfway into the room. All of our toys seemed inferior to a roll of fiberglass or a stick of smooth, blonde wood, and the silver slugs more valuable than currency. We would remain in the shack all morning, only to break to eat our lunch at home while Mr. Dee ate his sacked lunch. We'd return, perhaps half an hour later, and stay until five o'clock. It seemed that the day began and ended with Mr. Dee's arrival and departure.

His pick-up truck was the only wonder of the modern world we knew. It was beat-up and blue -- suiting his mien perfectly. My friends and I passed many a day sitting on the back of it exploring the carpentry tools of Mr. Dee's trade. The contents of his tool box were exotic and even dangerous. He often reminded us to be careful while providing a guarding eye. We were not allowed to venture inside the cab without him, though we often did. We thought that a steering wheel and stick shift elevated us to a "grown-up" level. The glove compartment always had a bag of candy and dozens of small, neat packets of wipe up towellelettes. We thought him the possessor of vast treasure.

I have no memory of Mr. Dee leaving his shack permanently, although I remember the ripping down of the sacred structure. Mr. Dee did not depart on a specific day, leaving







crying, sobbing, or sad admirers behind. It seems that he was, merely, just not around anymore. We probably missed him, somewhat, but it left no wound, no scar. As children do, we quickly filled the void in our life by finding other things to do. Not until ten years later, during the very summer I'd graduated from eighth grade, did I see him again.

He had come to fix the furnace, and it was then that I was finally informed that he was a sort of finishing carpenter for all the homes on my block. When they were finished he left. It surprised me because I don't remember him doing any carpentry work that took him outside of the shack.

The meeting and conversation itself was awkward because I had nothing to say. At least nothing, as a graduate, to say to a man as old as my grandpa. He looked much the same except he might have had less hair, but it is difficult to say. I suppose the most obvious change was his instability. He did not seem complete or whole without his blue pick-up truck or that shoddy shelter. He did not seem anchored down. And he left as he had come -- unannounced and disturbing not a thing, not a day, not a life.

Today, on that former vacant lot on which formerly sat the shack, stands a fine, well-kept home. I don't even know the family who inhabits it. My best buddies as a child have become mere nominal neighbors. And I haven't had a silver slug for years, and years, and years.

David Sheppard

### Thinking Back

*Now I have seen my life as one long sweet dream.*

*One day I hope I'll find the words which made my  
life take such a turn. I know it's hard to believe  
but I saw my life in front of me.*

*I viewed all my friends, many and few, no longer happy,  
no longer true. The sounds kept coming through the  
air, memories are gone that once were there.*

*And now that my life has blown in the breeze and rustled  
the branches of old oak trees, I solemnly sit, wonder  
and conceive, my life as it was, and as it will be.*

In Defense of the Poet

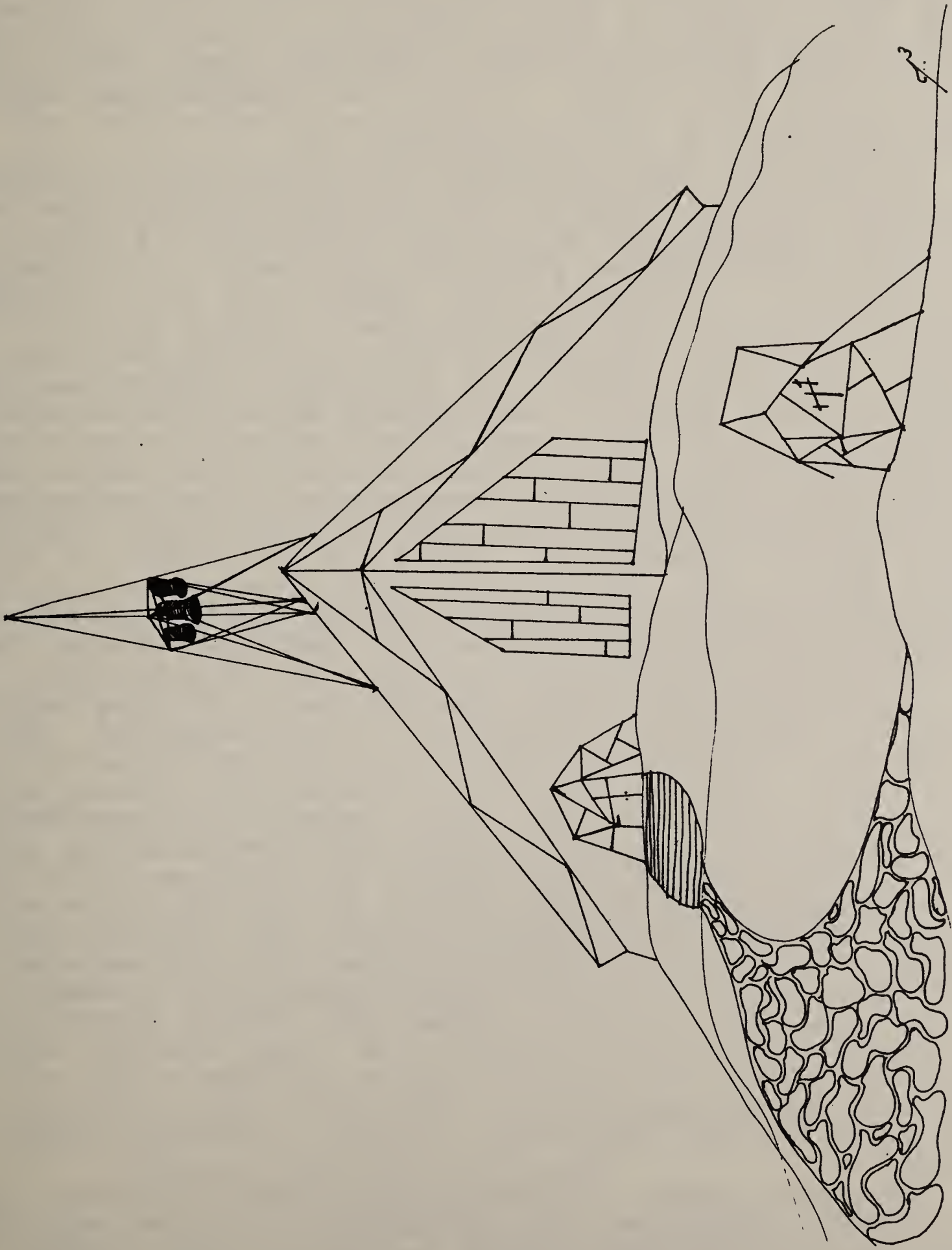
Crucified by the eyes and tongues of that cultivated anonymity called society, the Poet continues to relentlessly march on, at least most Poets do; that is, the Poet in pursuit of self-perfection, asking the fundamental questions of existence: who am I, and what is my relationship to the Universe, will continue to perfect himself by way of his Art.

We are taught by society, and we live by the hand of society: therefore it is only natural for society to want us to lead "healthy and normal" lives, the well-adjusted life, especially in our relationship to the stench of reality that volleys before us on the street, in the office building or at the school: must I lay out this blueprint of destiny for the mediocre? I tremble at the thought of it, but I am not laying it out, society is, and this is what society dictates: since every individual is unique, endowed with heavenly blessing and effusion, etc., etc., teeming with abundant potentiality, we guarantee to each and every individual an education that will render his life meaningful in our eyes, but most of all, meaningful in the eyes of his parents, friends, etc., oh, the joy of it; are we not all satisfied with the silver chalice of propriety - of course we are. Hey you out there! Do you notice all our helpful exhortations: you can make it in this world, we don't want to intimidate you into "herd" conformity, we want that you discover your true self, but social retaliation is only suggestive, and never a way out: remember we always win.

And society does win, though careful not to make that victory too explicit; for if it did, all the enjoyment of revolution would be taken away. Consider, the fundamentals of revolutionary theory are formulated in high school, especially in the junior and senior years, with particular emphasis on the senior; that is, revolutionary theory is not only verbatim, but it is put into practice, and occasionally the outcome of a 12:00 P.M. food protest at the school cafeteria, is favorable to the students. But after high school, revolution either loses its appeal entirely or it is revitalized with greater depth; however, for most individuals, revolution becomes the hypocrisy of a class, for in college, there are only two ways to go: one either makes it or doesn't. Competition stiffens, and the race to populate the mole-hill before the other class does is the primary objective of most career bound students.

And the encompassing lethargy, that which I normally refer to as society, becomes the destiny of most of the human race; to play with the concrete on the sidewalks leading to their place of employment or retribute, and to feel the atmosphere of emptiness and despondence when they enter, there to be greeted by a billion austere eyes if their clothes are not homogenized.





Finally, the Poet re-emerges. Seeking to cultivate his "true" nature and realize himself; but the eyes and tongues of class-conditioned motivations reel before him. The conflict begins. But the temptation to society - and thus mediocrity - is a difficult one to extirpate. Riches lie before him, at least the possibility of obtaining them; honors also and of course scholarship. Particularly scholarship, because it it that means to obtain, usually, any desired goal: and riches and honor are the by-products.

But the Poet must deprecate society because it prevents him from realizing himself. For example, Antonin Artaud was a Poet of extraordinary vision, and therefore, his personality and temperament differed from those of others. A Poet who sees things in a different light, penetrating into a Universe in search of a new intellectual element, cannot possibly function to the dictates of that careering institution called society. He cannot possibly be expected to follow the dictates of normal behavior - and when he doesn't he is usually reprimanded. When this happens, the Poet usually seeks isolation; many times the so-called "good at heart" try to send him to a mental institution, because that is the easiest way to deal with a deviate: are not the "good at heart" society's "well-rounded" individuals? Having the scholarship of what is and what is not, they are the elite of social molding and manipulation; yet their knowledge of the creative process is simply non-existent, non-existent for the simple reason that the pursuit of it calls for too much pain and suffering.

For many people, poetic creation has no utilitarian or pragmatic significance; therefore, it is disregarded. But the Poet, in search of his own destiny and self will not concern himself with the utilitarian or pragmatic aspects of his work, if he believes himself worthy enough to be considered a Poet, he will or at least he should make the following statement: "I will not ask whether Poetry will harm me or profit me."

Many people believe the Poet to be suffering from some kind of delirium; and especially today, when the Poet confines himself to solitude and the Universe within his own being. These same people accuse him of soliciting drugs, because it is inconceivable for them to fathom that anyone contemplating the poetic multiplicity of Life to be in one reality; they sweep the anxiety of the 20th century and come to the conclusion that the contemplation of the poetic multiplicity of Life is an "escape" from "this" reality - achieved through drugs.

Yet these highly rational, scholar bred individuals cannot possibly understand the sensitivity of the Poet who moves about in much different worlds, responds to other stimuli, and is far more affected by his surroundings than are the highly rational, scholar bred individuals.

The act of creation is not any elaboration of the established order, but a going beyond that order; or at least a reorganization of it with the addition of a few more insights. The Poet is in the process of creating a new order! And if he



continues to pursue his Art with veracity he will not succumb to the formality of any institution, of any constituted body of laws, but laws not to be concretized into a doctrine of systemized belief - irrefutable dogma; for example, the irrefutable dogma that swells like a bagpipe in any Organized Church, or the irrefutable dogma that crawls like a pig from a basson in any Constitution!

The Poet that sinks into convention, that creates solely to please his reading public, is not a Poet, but simply a journalist feeding the reader's eye with tawdry information!

The Poet that does not break from the "established order" because of fear of social retaliation is not a Poet, but simply a puppet, destined to create the way people prefer he ought to write!

The road leading to happiness is only a suggestive one for the Poet; actually, there is no such road, because in a lifetime of creation personal aim and ambition is sacrificed for future universal acclamation, or in other words, immortality. The Poet will not deny this quest for immortality, but I believe, his dedication and "will to truth" finding expression through the vehicle of Poetry surpasses the quest for "raw" immortality. Yet immortality does create other Dawns.

Before the possibility of realizing any new order, the security (resting in systemized belief) of the established order must be shattered. The road to conventionalism must be repudiated, and the Poet must come to the realization that new Life comes not from this world, but from outside it. This insight into the mechanics of creation is obtained only through the supreme act of self-realization by the Poet: the awareness of his destiny and purpose.

The Poet is a Seer in quest of new Life, not in this world, but in other worlds; and in his perseverance to discover such Life, loneliness becomes a frequent visitor, since the Poet is always moving towards uncertainties. The Poet travelling across that trek of the Universe, where no other man has ever set foot, will always face loneliness, because his effort is an individual one.

--

*Every man must walk in the garden  
of his soul alone.*

-- Chinese proverb



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In the sun that is young once only  
Time let me play and be  
Golden in the mercy of his means

Dylan Thomas





